

Memorandum

City Manager



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**Subject: Employee Assistance Program**

**Effective Date: October 28, 1983**

**Revised Date: March 8, 2002**

**PURPOSE:**

Your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a workplace benefit, sponsored by the City of Tempe, which covers all eligible employees and their covered family members. The EAP offers managers and employees the tools and resources to identify and resolve productivity and job-performance-based problems, which can result from personal crises, issues, or concerns.

**EAP Services**

By calling the EAP, City of Tempe employees can get no-cost, confidential assistance with any of the following concerns or with other problems that may be troubling them:

- Stress
- Physical Abuse
- Single Parenting
- Alcohol or Drug Problems

- Depression
- Dual Careers
- Anxiety
- Parent-Child Conflicts
- Job Burnout
- Workplace Problems
- Marital and Relationship Problems
- Compulsive Gambling
- Aging Parents
- Death and Dying
- Financial or Legal Concerns
- Sexual Problems
- Retirement Concerns
- Eating Disorders

EAP services for all employees include, but are not limited to: confidential, appropriate, and timely face-to-face assessment services; legal and mediation referral services; and brief counseling (if appropriate).

Whenever an employee uses EAP services, all information concerning the individual and his/her participation in the program shall remain confidential in accordance with applicable state and federal laws.

Referral to the EAP can be the result of a self-referral or a matter of supervisory discretion as discussed below.

The EAP also offers supervisors unlimited telephonic consultations with United Behavioral Health Clinical Assessment Reviewers for concerns related to the identification and resolution of employee behavior and work performance.

To access the EAP, employees should call this toll-free number: 1-800-788-5614 (1-800-842-9489 TDD). An experienced EAP specialist will answer all calls, 24

hours a day, seven days a week, and will help identify the nature of the individual's problem and the correct resources to address them.

Generally, if an employee participates in the EAP during work time, the employee's absence from work would be in accordance with Rule 503 of the City's Personnel Rules and Regulations concerning medical leave. If an employee is required to attend EAP services as a condition of employment, the employee may be able to attend during work time without using medical leave.

### **Self-Referral**

Many employees seek assistance through the EAP individually, or at the encouragement and with the support of family members, friends, or co-workers. Employees self-refer to the EAP for many reasons: stress, depression, relationship issues, co-worker or supervisor conflicts, job burnout, and other personal issues or workplace concerns.

### **Supervisory Referral**

When personal difficulties interfere with an employee's job performance or create work site problems, the EAP offers a place for supervisors and employees to turn to. Performance issues may include, but are not limited to, excessive absenteeism, repeated tardiness, unusual mood swings, or reduction in quality or quantity of work.

Importantly, it is not the role of the supervisor to resolve the employee's personal problems.

Furthermore, a supervisor should not act in the role of confidant, counselor or diagnostician. Rather, it is the supervisor's responsibility to be explicit about an employee's job performance expectations, to document accurately any deviations from these expectations, and to take appropriate disciplinary action in the event the employee's job performance fails to meet acceptable standards.

When job performance problems indicate that an employee may be experiencing some difficulty, the supervisor may remind the employee of the availability of the EAP and suggest that the employee participate in the program. The supervisory referral to the EAP is an option that allows the supervisor to assist an employee with his/her problem(s), thus helping the employee resolve his/her performance issue(s). A supervisory referral to the EAP is a strong recommendation that the employee use all available means to correct his/her performance. Ultimately, it is the employee's decision whether or not to use the services of the EAP (unless extraordinary circumstances exist, as discussed below—see ***Mandatory Referrals***).

The following process should help guide a supervisor who is contemplating referring an employee to the EAP:

1. Any time a supervisor has a concern with an employee's job performance or behavior at work, the supervisor should address that concern with the employee immediately. A supervisory referral to the EAP should come only after a supervisor has

discussed his/her concerns with the employee.

2. If a supervisor would like to meet with an employee to make a supervisory referral to the EAP, he/she should contact Human Resources for guidance.
3. The supervisor should meet with the employee in a private setting.
4. The supervisor should state that the reason for the meeting is to discuss the employee's performance issues and how the supervisor can help the employee resolve those issues.
5. Using specific examples, the supervisor should explain what he/she views the performance problem(s) to be.
6. The supervisor should use the City's performance improvement and/or disciplinary processes to deal with any existing performance issues, if necessary.
7. The supervisor and the employee should establish and agree on a performance action plan for the employee, which addresses the identified problem areas and clearly states the expected performance objectives. The Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) should also contain a realistic time frame in which the supervisor expects to see a positive change in the employee's performance.
8. The supervisor should define any possible consequences for the employee if the performance objectives are not met in the identified time frame.

9. The supervisor should acknowledge that personal issues or concerns could often have an effect on work performance and suggest that the employee use the EAP. *See Employee Assistance Referral Form.*
10. The supervisor should provide the employee with the City's EAP brochure.
11. Finally, the supervisor should explain to the employee that regardless of whether or not the employee attends the EAP, the employee's performance must improve or the disciplinary process will continue.

### **Mandatory Referral**

When a supervisor reasonably suspects that an employee is involved in a situation that violates a state or federal statute or regulation, where the safety of the employee or others is an immediate concern, or if there is a serious performance issue, the supervisor may make a mandatory referral to the EAP. In the Manager's EAP Resource Guide, United Behavioral Health highlights the following signs by an employee that might signal a need for a mandatory referral to the EAP:

1. impaired balance, dexterity, or coordination;
2. extreme and inappropriate verbal outbursts;
3. odor of alcohol on an employee's breath;
4. slurred or incoherent speech;
5. obvious hostility or aggression (verbal or physical) directed at self or others;

6. significant or extreme changes in mood or behavior, without any apparent explanation;
7. violent or destructive behaviors, directed at equipment or property;
8. threats of harm to self or others; or
9. where state or federal statutes or regulations have been violated.

If a supervisor believes that an employee should receive a mandatory referral to the EAP, that supervisor should contact his/her Department Manager and Human Resources immediately for guidance on how to proceed. If a supervisor believes that the employee is in immediate danger of harming himself/herself or others, the supervisor should intervene immediately, and notify the Police Department. Once the situation is under control, the supervisor should contact Human Resources for additional guidance.

In the event of a mandatory referral, the supervisor will be informed if the employee was seen by the EAP and whether or not he/she is following EAP recommendations. At all times, however, the confidentiality of client information shall be maintained in the highest standards as guided by law and professional ethics.

A mandatory supervisor referral to the EAP requires an employee to participate in the EAP as a condition of continued employment. (*See Authorization for Release of Information.*) Mandatory EAP referrals, like supervisory referrals, do not replace disciplinary action.

The City of Tempe assures all employees that use of the EAP will not be used to determine job security or be a consideration in an opportunity for promotion.

The use of the EAP will not alter standard administrative practices applicable to job performance requirements. Any documentation placed by the supervisor in the employee's personnel file shall relate solely to job performance and should not include any reference to the employee's suspected personal problems. Supervisors should limit any documentation regarding the EAP to the fact that the services of the EAP were offered to the individual as a means of helping them deal with a concern.

If employees or supervisors have further questions about EAP services or the referral process, they should contact Human Resources.